

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 08757 302307Z

64

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4496

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8757

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AR, FA, UK

SUBJ: GOA REQUEST FOR SUPPORT IN FALKLAND (MALVINAS) ISLANDS
DISPUTE

REF: A. STATE 229798; B. BA 8418

1. WHEN I SAW HIM NOV 29 ON OTHER MATTERS, FONMIN VIGNES
AGAIN RAISED THIS SUBJECT. I TOLD HIM, PER REF A, THAT OUR POLICY
OF NOT TAKING SIDES IN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES BUT OF ENCOURAGING
PARTIES TO NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY TO REACH A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION
WAS NOT "INDIFFERENCE" BUT WHAT WE CONSIDERED THE MOST PRACTICAL
WAY WE COULD BE OF HELP TO FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS.

2. VIGNES SAID HE FULLY APPRECIATED OUR RELUCTANCE TO BECOME
INVOLVED, AND THAT IT WOULD BE IN HIS VIEW ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE
PROVIDED HMG WERE DISPOSED TO NEGOTIATE. HOWEVER, THE PROBLEM
IS THAT UK HAS SHIFTED ITS POSITION AND NOW INSISTS THAT ITS
DEALINGS WITH GOA ON DISPUTE MAY ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS "CONVER-
SATIONS" AND NOT AS "NEGOTIATIONS." THE STANDING UNGA RESOLUTION
CALLS FOR LATTER.

3. VIGNES WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE FOUND IT DIFFICUTL TO
RECONCILE OUR ATTITUDE ON FALKLAND (MALVINAS) QUESTION WITH OUR
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 08757 302307Z

LONG TRADITION OF SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO TERMINATE COLONIALISM.

HE SAID US HAD WON WIDESPREAD RESPECT FOR ITS OPPOSITION TO COLONIALISM AND THAT WE WERE JEOPARDIZING THIS ASSET BY NOT TAKING FORTHRIGHT POSITION ON VESTIGIAL REMNANTS OF COLONIALIST PAST. I SAID I THOUGH POSSIBLY THE SOLUTION TO THE MALVINAS PROBLEM MIGHT LIE IN CONTINUED PATIENT EFFORTS SUCH AS ARGENTINA HAS BEEN CARRYING OUT IN RECENT YEARS TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE ISLANDS' INHABITANTS THAT THEY HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM FUTURE INCORPORATION INTO ARGENTINA BUT RATHER WOULD ENJOY SUBSTANTIAL PRACTICAL ADVANTAGES OVER THEIR PRESENT STATUS.

4. TO THIS VIGNES REPLIED THAT A MAJORITY OF THE 1800 INHABITANTS ARE CROWN EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE NO INCENTIVE TO CHANGE THEIR STATUS. MOREOVER HE SAID THAT IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH HMG AMBASSADOR HOPSON, LATTER HAD SAID THAT UNDER PRESENT GOVERNMENT UK PARLIAMENT WOULD NEVER VOTE TO TURN OVER ISLANDS TO ARGENTINA.

5. COMMENT: VIGNES OBVIOUSLY ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ACHIEVING AT LEAST SOME PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH UK OVER ISLANDS. UK POSITION GIVES APPEARANCE OF BOTH STALLING AND HAIR-SPLITTING. MIGHT IT NOT BE OPPORTUNE FOR US TO INQUIRE OF HMG WHAT HAS BROUGHT ABOUT APPARENT CHANGE IN THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD DISCUSSIONS WITH GOA AND AT SAME TIME INFORM THEM OF THE SEVERAL APPROACHES WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO UN ON THE MATTER BY THE ARGENTINES.

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